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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7626th meeting
Thursday, 18 February 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ramírez Carreño	(Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Briefing by the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Briefing by the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Somalia to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009).

I am honoured to have convened today's Security Council briefing on the activities of the Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee. My statement today will focus on recent developments and the latest findings of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group. Today's briefing is being conducted in accordance with sub-paragraph 11 (g) of resolution 1844 (2008).

With respect to the arms embargo imposed on Somalia, since the beginning of this year, the Committee has received one notification under paragraph 10 (g) of resolution 2111 (2013). The Committee has also received two notifications in accordance with paragraph 11 (a) of resolution 2011 (2013).

At its informal consultations on 9 October 2015, the Committee reviewed the final reports of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group, and discussed their recommendations. The Monitoring Group reported that international interest in the rich marine resources and minerals of Somalia had grown. That interest, however, had not yet been accompanied by adequate efforts to manage these resources. The Monitoring Group considered that this constituted a potential threat to peace, security and stability in Somalia. With respect to the mineral resources sector in Somalia, the Monitoring Group said that tensions between the Federal Government of Somalia and regional administrations were on the rise as both continued to sign agreements with international oil and gas companies.

With regard to the threat posed by Al-Shabaab to Somalia and the region, the Group reported that it persisted despite the fact that several of its leaders had been killed. Al-Shabaab took advantage of the fact that the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the Somali National Army and allied forces are at the limit of their capacities, making their bases increasingly vulnerable to possible attacks. The Monitoring Group also found that Al-Shabaab is seeking to maintain communications with Yemen and Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. The Monitoring Group reported that the Federal Government of Somalia and provisional regional administrations had trouble controlling the territories liberated from Al-Shabaab, which has led to the resurgence of tensions and conflicts among communities.

With regard to humanitarian access, the Monitoring Group reported that it remained extremely fragile, especially in areas where Al-Shabaab had established blockades of humanitarian supplies and trade by arresting and killing civilians and destroying their property. Foreign and domestic forces active in Somalia continued to attack civilians, either as a deliberate tactic of war or through the disproportionate use of force.

With respect to charcoal, the Monitoring Group reported that the implementation of its ban had improved since Al-Shabaab was displaced from locations where it is shipped for export. However, because the use of forged documents is widespread among carriers, Somali charcoal continued to be exported. In that regard, the Monitoring Group suggested that the Somali authorities, Member States, AMISOM and troop-contributing countries seek to better coordinate their efforts to ensure the existence of a comprehensive and efficient mechanism against the illegal trade in Somali charcoal.

The Monitoring Group noted the substantive progress made by the Federal Government with regard to the quality and timeliness of its notifications to the Committee concerning imported weapons. At the same time, the Group expressed concern about the lack of precision of the information provided on the composition and arrangement of the security forces. In this regard, the Committee decided to address a note verbale to all Member States, asking them to support the comprehensive security sector reform programme

announced by the Office of the President of the Federal Government of Somalia on 9 September 2015, in order to ensure the timely delivery of technical and financial assistance to the security sector.

Let me now turn to the Monitoring Group's report on Eritrea. The Group found no evidence that the Government of Eritrea had provided support to Al-Shabaab. However, it reported that Eritrea was supporting armed groups in Ethiopia, in contravention of paragraph 16 of resolution 1907 (2009). The Group reported that it had spoken with the Eritrean Government on several occasions, but that the authorities of that country had shown little willingness to cooperate. The Group also noted the lack of progress in resolving the border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea. The Committee hopes that the Qatari mediation efforts will contribute to resolving this matter.

The outbreak of the crisis in Yemen was a new development. The Group received unconfirmed reports of the presence of Eritrean soldiers in Yemen, fighting alongside the Arab coalition. If these reports are confirmed, the Group has said that this participation could constitute a violation of paragraph 6 of the same resolution. After the Council adopted resolution 2244 (2015), the Secretary-General appointed to the Monitoring Group eight experts knowledgeable in weapons, armed groups, finance, humanitarian affairs, maritime affairs and transportation, natural resources and regional issues.

Between 11 and 15 January, eight experts of the Monitoring Group, visiting New York to participate in an orientation programme and the planning of its mandate, held bilateral meetings with key delegations, including myself as Chairman of the Sanctions Committee on Somalia and Eritrea, as well as the Permanent Representative of Eritrea. In the first update in writing that the Committee received this year, the Monitoring Group stated that it continued to work with the diplomatic community, the United Nations system in Nairobi and key stakeholders in the Horn of Africa in order to actively identify new areas of research and to expand the network of contacts in order to fulfil its new mandate. It is expected that, on 22 April, the coordinator of the Monitoring Group shall provide the Committee with the mid-term update on the Group's investigations and activities that the Council has requested with a view to having the final report ready on 15 October 2016.

The Committee is currently considering a draft guidance note for implementing resolutions in order to provide guidance and operational recommendations to Member States, the Somali Government and other relevant institutions to implement the measures of the arms embargo more efficiently. The draft guidance note summarizes existing restrictions imposed by the arms embargo on Somalia and Eritrea, describes exemptions to the measures, and clarifies problems that have been encountered by Member States and the Somali Government, in particular in applying the arms embargo. The Committee is expected to approve the draft guidance note and make it public in early March. The Committee has expressed its interest in assessing the changes in the security situation in the Horn of Africa with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the current sanctions regime in Somalia and Eritrea.

Finally, I would like to thank Council members for entrusting me again with the chairmanship of this important Committee. I will continue doing everything in my power to guide the work of the Committee in a balanced and fair manner. I am confident that, through its work, the Committee will make a significant contribution to the Council's efforts to achieve lasting peace and stability in Somalia, Eritrea and the Horn of Africa.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the other members of the Security Council.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): I thank you, Sir, for convening this briefing. It is well timed, following our discussion of sanctions last week.

As this is our first opportunity to do so in the Chamber, I should like to begin by expressing my condolences and those of the United Kingdom to the family of Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali and to our Egyptian colleagues following the death of the former Secretary-General on Tuesday. He was an influential leader of the United Nations, presiding over the Organization during one of its most challenging times.

One such challenge was, of course, Somalia. He was tireless in his efforts to bring peace and stability to that war-torn country, both by convening the ceasefire talks in 1992 and through the subsequent deployments of the United Nations Operation in Somalia. I am sure he would have been heartened by the great progress made in that country over recent years.

If we are to sustain that progress in Somalia this year, the continued engagement of the Council will be vital. The elections in the autumn are a crucial litmus test for the welcome developments over the past four years. But, as the attempted bombing of the Somali airliner this month showed, real challenges remain. The Council needs to be as attentive as ever. The work of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group is a vital tool. The Group is essential to keeping the Council informed about what is happening on the ground. Let me set out two ways to achieve that this year.

First, it is a sad inevitability that there will be some individuals and entities inside and outside the Government and political institutions who will seek to spoil the political process to serve their own ends. This is exactly the sort of information the Monitoring Group needs to bring to our attention. We then need to show that, as a Council, we are prepared to act. The Somali people deserve a transparent and representative Government. We owe it to them to help make this a reality.

Secondly, turning to the military side, we must not underestimate Al-Shabaab. They are down, but they are far from out, which means that it is more important than ever for Somalia to develop a credible and effective security force that can tackle the threat it faces. Again, the Monitoring Group has a key role to play by ensuring that the Somali Government is fulfilling the terms of the arms embargo suspension. This must include the Government marking, registering and storing weapons properly, and taking steps to build a truly national army, rather than a series of regional militia.

It is important to underline the need for a frank and constructive relationship between the Monitoring Group and the Government of Somalia. This has improved in recent years. Inevitably, with elections approaching, the political temperature will increase. It is imperative in the months ahead that the relationship remain constructive, even if both parties do not agree. The maturity with which the Government of Somalia approaches its relationship with the Monitoring Group will be an important indicator of how far the country has moved in recent years.

Sadly, Eritrea's relationship with the Monitoring Group is not nearly as constructive. In fact, it remains unacceptable. The Group has a Chapter VII mandate from the Council. As we heard so clearly in the open debate on Monday (S/PV.7621), the powers invested by the Charter through Chapter VII are not to be taken lightly, and certainly not to be ignored. Eritrea must cooperate with the Group and admit it into Eritrea. It is frankly outrageous that this has not happened for the past three years. So the ball is in Eritrea's court. It can admit the Monitoring Group, have a constructive relationship with the Group and allow the Council to have an informed debate on the propriety of sanctions, or it can continue to choose isolation, with all that entails. I hope that, with a new Monitoring Group now in place, Eritrea will see cooperation as the correct response.

In Somalia and Eritrea, we see two contrasting responses to wholly legitimate requests from the Council. On the one side, engagement with the Monitoring Group has supported progress that was once thought unimaginable. On the other, continued stalling and inaction have left Eritrea in isolation. In discussing both countries today in open session, I hope we can bring renewed focus to that contrast and encourage Eritrea to change its approach. As we do so, it is imperative that we give our full support to the work of the Monitoring Group. They need it in the year ahead.

Mr. Okamura (Japan): As this is the first meeting on the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, my delegation would like to start by congratulating you, Sir, on your work as Chair of that Committee. Let me also commend the work carried out by the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group.

For Somalia, this is a crucial year for the implementation of Vision 2016. Japan welcomes the recent inclusive Somali-led discussion on an electoral model, and the decision announced by the Federal Government of Somalia at the end of January. It is now important for all parties of Somalia to set aside their remaining differences, engage constructively in the political process without delay, and agree on the details so that this decision may be implemented in time for the elections to be carried out by September. In that connection, proper management of public finances in the run-up to the elections is crucial. We must not allow spoiler networks to manipulate the course of events through financial bribes or threats. The Security Council should be ready, if necessary, to consider listing individuals engaged in any acts that threaten the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia for targeted measures.

Al-Shabaab remains a major threat. Japan strongly condemns the terrorist attacks that took place recently, and we express our sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathies to the victims and their families. We pay tribute to the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army for their work under harsh conditions on the ground. In order to prevent Al-Shabaab from taking further advantage, we believe that it is crucial that offensive operations against Al-Shabaab by AMISOM, the Somali National Army and the police be carried out in an even more closely coordinated manner. We look forward to the troop-contributing country summit and the High-level Partnership Forum in Istanbul next week for concrete results in that direction.

After long endeavours, Somalia is at last moving steadily towards State-building. This must be Somali-led, but at the same time supported by the international community. It is my pleasure to announce that Japan has recently provided additional assistance of $37.1 million, which we expect to be used for State-building measures in Somalia, such as supporting the election process and police training. Japan is a strong supporter of the Monitoring Group.

It is unfortunate that the Monitoring Group has not been able to visit Eritrea since February 2011. I would like to recall that all Member States are under the obligation to act in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and to cooperate with the Monitoring Group so that this important body can carry out its mandated tasks fully and effectively. To that end, we hope to see the new experts of the Monitoring Group and Government of Eritrea both engaging in a cooperative and constructive manner this year, with the support of the Sanctions Committee and the Council.

Japan stands ready to provide every support as we continue our work in the sanctions committee under your chairmanship.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to express my thanks to the Chairman of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, the Permanent Representative of Venezuela, for his efforts.

We highly value the efforts made by the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group as well. The sanctions regime against Somalia and Eritrea is one of the oldest regimes imposed by the Council. It clearly demonstrates the necessity for the Council to accord adequate importance to the working methods of subsidiary organs of the Security Council. That should be done in order to develop those working methods, modernize the sanctions regime for further effectiveness and impact, and attain the political objectives we all seek. I therefore affirm what I said at the open debate in the Security Council on 11 February (see S/PV. 7620).

The recent developments in Somalia show how important it is for the Council and for all international and regional parties to work to use the momentum, realize an effective political reconciliation, re-establish the State and confront the security threats posed by the Al-Shabaab movement. We call upon all States to do the necessary work and provide all necessary support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in order to guarantee the Mission's success in fulfilling its mandate. We also call upon States to accord greater importance and provide further material assistance to the Somali Government in order to build the capacity of the Somali forces. This is the only way to reach the desired result; it is a cornerstone for all efforts to restore peace and security in the country.

We express our concern with regard to the continued threats to relief organizations and the obstruction of delivery of humanitarian assistance to civilians, as well as the continued exportation of charcoal from many Somali ports. We call on the Somali Government, AMISOM and all international parties to provide the necessary protection for humanitarian efforts and guarantee that the international embargo on charcoal exports is respected.

We reiterate the importance of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of sanctions regime on Somalia and Eritrea in a manner that is commensurate with peace efforts and which does not have a negative impact on international efforts to counter terrorism in the southern Red Sea region and in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for your briefing on the work of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. My delegation welcomes your able leadership of that Committee. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the members of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group on their appointment pursuant to resolution 2245 (2015).

Malaysia welcomes the Monitoring Group's active pursuit of its mandate, including through its

engagement with a wide range of interlocutors, its visits to third countries and its site visits in Somalia. However, it is regrettable to note that the group was not granted access into Eritrea during the reporting period. Access of the group to Eritrea would provide an important opportunity for the Government to engage constructively with the international community, with a view to achieving better understanding of the outstanding issues and questions, as well as in addressing possible concerns. We urge Eritrea to consider positively enhancing its cooperation with the Committee and the Group in line with its obligations under the relevant Council resolutions.

Somalia has undergone tremendous changes over the years. In the past few years, we have seen significant positive momentum in the critical aspects of the political dialogue and State- and institution-building processes. Such momentum has resulted in modest yet tangible gains, including in the areas of peace and security and the socioeconomic development of the country. Mindful that 2016 is a particularly important year for Somalia, it is important for the positive momentum to be maintained.

In this regard, Malaysia welcomes the recent announcements by the Federal Government of Somalia on the electoral model for 2016. The Federal Government should continue to work closely and cooperatively with the existing and emerging regional administrations in a transparent and inclusive manner so as to ensure buy-in and cement support for the model and the ensuing process. This would be a crucial step towards a successful political transition. In this regard, it is equally important that differences between the federal and regional authorities on the issue of exploitation of mineral resources be managed in a constructive and equitable manner.

On a separate note, Malaysia echoes concerns expressed on the humanitarian situation in Somalia, particularly in areas where there is ongoing fighting against Al-Shabaab and where intercommunal tensions and conflicts have re-emerged. We note that in 2015 alone, at least 157 incidents of grave violations against children were documented. In its ongoing effort to improve the overall peace and security situation in the country, we urge the Government to continue implementing its action plan on children and armed conflict.

It is important to continue focusing on the threat posed by terrorist groups in Somalia, particularly Al-Shabaab. Malaysia fully concurs with the view that pressure must continue to be exerted on that group, its supporters and affiliates. We greatly value and respect the sacrifices made by all security sector actors in Somalia, most notably by the African Union Mission in Somalia and the Somalia security forces in countering this threat. Such threats can only be effectively neutralized through a comprehensive strategy.

In this regard, the finalization of the national security policy and a national defence act as well as the integration of regional forces into the Somali National Army are positive developments, which contribute to enhancing its ability to combat Al-Shabaab. At the same time, we note that the respective presences of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula are seeping into Somalia and the Horn of Africa. As rightly highlighted in the President's briefing, this worrying development is one of the factors changing the security situation in the country.

With regard to the Council's work on this issue, it may be useful to consider convening a joint meeting between the 751/1907 Committee and the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. The purpose could be, inter alia, to explore possible synergies in the work of both Committees, including examining how the existing sanctions regimes could be better focused on terrorists, their supporters and affiliates, which all threaten to undermine the positive gains made in Somalia, and perhaps more generally in assessing and addressing the threat posed to the Horn of Africa.

With regard to the implementation of the charcoal ban, Malaysia supports the recommendations for better coordination between the combined maritime forces and the Federal Government of Somalia in curbing the illegal trade in Somali charcoal. The Monitoring Group could play a bridging role, including through the sharing of information in this regard.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm my delegation's commitment to working closely with the 751/1907 Committee and its Chair, the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group, all Council members, partners and stakeholders in contributing to our collective effort in assisting Somalia, in the maintenance of peace and

security and in securing stability in the Horn of Africa and beyond.

Mr. Taula (New Zealand): We very much welcome this open briefing, which we believe increases transparency and helps implementation. The Somalia sanctions regime has transformed over its long history since the 1990s, and it now fulfils an important role in supporting Somali State-building goals.

As we said in last week's debate (see S/PV. 7620), sanctions are not imposed in isolation. The sanctions regime can assist in achieving the political, security and humanitarian goals in Somalia, namely completing Vision 2016, accelerating the fight against Al-Shabaab and addressing Somalia's humanitarian needs. When the Council discusses Somalia in 2016, in what is a precarious year for the country, we must include discussion of sanctions, and we must take into account the valuable information contained in the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group's reports.

One important example is in the area of natural resources. Generous maritime and mineral wealth present a great opportunity for Somalia, but they also present a possible driver of conflict, in the absence of an effective regulatory framework. This risk is exacerbated during the federalism process. The Council will need to remain alert to how it can support Somalia in its stewardship of its natural resources, drawing on the expertise of the Monitoring Group, the United Nations presence on the ground, and partners. That role includes support for governance of natural resources, but also extends to assisting Somalia in channelling its natural resource wealth into State-building and other key issues, for example, ensuring full and regular payment to soldiers in the Somali National Army.

Resolution 2244 (2015), adopted last year, touched on illegal fishing. That issue remains of concern and we are ready to support the Federal Government's efforts to establish and enforce an appropriate legal regime as contemplated by the resolution. Security sector reform efforts and depriving Al-Shabaab of financing are also priorities.

The Somalia sanctions regime must be implemented by Somalia and other States Members of the United Nations, including its neighbours. But to be truly effective a range of other actors also have important roles to play, including the African Union Mission in Somalia and multinational partnerships like the Combined Maritime Forces. Continued outreach by the Committee and the Monitoring Group with those partners is needed to ensure that sanctions are fully implemented. An example of that is the progress made on avoiding technical breaches of the arms embargo through more consistent advance notifications of imports under the arms embargo. We also welcome the Committee's recent initiative to develop an implementation assistance notice on arms. That is a practical initiative that has the potential to be very useful in clarifying obligations, particularly for those Member States not on the Council.

Finally, on Eritrea, we are hopeful that 2016 could be a positive year for engagement with the Committee and the Monitoring Group. We believe a visit to the region by the Committee — something that was discussed last year — would be a helpful step. We are ready to support such efforts.

Mr. Ilichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the briefing on the activities of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, which you, Sir, chair.

We are worried about the recent intensification in the various terrorist tactics of Al-Shabaab throughout large parts of Somalia, including Mogadishu, and the trend of strengthening the group's ties with Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Despite the fact that the forces of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) now control 80 per cent of the Somali territory, large-scale terrorist attacks committed by Al-Shabaab since the beginning of the year clearly demonstrate that extremists are still in a position to seriously destabilize the situation.

Those factors, together with the potentially negative consequences of the conflict in Yemen, demonstrate the need to continue the military pressure on the Islamists, based on the efforts of Somali authorities, to stabilize the liberated areas and establish viable local governance there. It seems that there is a need for further international support for African peacekeepers and the Somali National Army, including along the lines of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), as well as in line with the coordination and advisory role played by the United Nations Support Office for AMISOM. We look forward to the successful implementation of the obligations set out in resolution 2245 (2015), which expanded the mandate of UNSOS.

We support the idea of strengthening the police contingent of AMISOM and adapting the activities of UNSOS to the task of increasing of the effectiveness of its operations. In the future, we must increase the provision of equipment and technical support in line with Security Council decisions. In that context, we welcome the adoption of a law on combating money laundering and terrorist financing by the country's Parliament on 26 December 2015.

We call for a strengthening of the sanctions regime with respect to Somalia, including strict adherence to the arms and charcoal embargo, as well as monitoring of the coastal waters of Somalia and assistance from AMISOM in that area, in line with resolution 2244 (2015). We think that the embargo on arms and charcoal from Somalia are key instruments for preventing the fuelling of extremist forces in the country. We have seen the effectiveness of a partial lifting of the embargo in the provision of arms to the Somali armed forces.

The restrictions with respect to Eritrea reveal a totally different picture. We are pleased to note that the Monitoring Group has found no evidence that the Eritrean Government is supporting the Al-Shabaab armed group. No convincing data have yet been provided to indicate that country is conducting subversive activities. In that regard, we think attempts to increase pressure on Asmara are counterproductive. Once again, we call upon the Monitoring Group to use only verified information in its reports.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The Senegalese delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this briefing. We would like to thank the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009), concerning Somalia and Eritrea, which you, Sir, preside over, for the excellent report you presented. We assure you, Sir, of our full support.

At the outset, I would like to convey to the Egyptian delegation the sympathy and heartfelt condolences of the Senegalese delation on the death of His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a well-known Egyptian of Africa and the Arab world, who was an excellent Secretary-General of the United Nations. Thanks to his talent, rigour, vision and, above all, commitment, he made a significant contribution to the development of multilateralism, including in the Chamber in which we are gathered today.

My delegation would also like to thank the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group for its high-quality report (see S/2015/802) and encourage it to continue to work in collaboration with the entire international community, United Nations agencies in Kenya and all stakeholders in the region to ensure the full implementation of its mandate. With regard to Somalia, I wish every success to the meeting of partners to be held next week in Istanbul.

My country continues to be concerned about the differences between the Federal Government and the regional administrations with regard to the management of the mining resources of the country, which are subject to the growing covetousness of international companies, and with regional administrations tending to sign contracts directly with those companies. In that regard, Senegal condemns the ongoing violations of the ban on the export of charcoal from Somalia, even though there has been a slight lull in those activities since the withdrawal of Al-Shabaab from the export sites. In that regard, my delegation calls for better coordination of the efforts among the Federal Government, the federal member states, international organizations and the forces on the ground to create a viable and effective mechanism to combat illicit trafficking in Somali charcoal.

My delegation reiterates the need to uphold the charcoal ban and fully implement resolution 2195 (2014), on the links between transnational organized crime and terrorism. Cooperation should also be bolstered to prevent Al-Shabaab militias from financing their activities through trafficking in charcoal. Senegal would like to encourage the ongoing efforts deployed by maritime forces to fight against the illicit trafficking in natural resources and the cooperation of those forces with the Monitoring Group.

On the security front, Senegal remains deeply worried by the ongoing threat of Al-Shabaab throughout Somalia, including in the liberated areas. My delegation is also concerned about intercommunal tensions and the growing entrenchment of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in the region. Facing these ongoing threats, my delegation is pleased to note the cooperation of the Monitoring Group with the Federal Government on notification to the Committee of imported weapons, and appeals for the arms embargo in Somalia and Eritrea to be upheld. Along the same lines, my delegation encourages the finalization of an implementation assistance noticee to provide guidelines

and operational recommendations to Member States, the Somali Government and other relevant entities for the full implementation of the arms embargo.

As you stressed in your briefing, Sir, Senegal invites Member States to carefully consider the letter dated 9 September 2015, in which the President of the Somali Federal Government requested support for rapid financing and technical assistance for the security sector. Regarding attacks on humanitarian personnel, the diversion of assistance and impediments to its delivery, my delegation firmly condemns all such attacks, whoever the perpetrators may be.

Senegal reiterates its support for the people and the Government of Somalia in the electoral consultations to take place in 2016, in particular with respect to women's representation at a level of 30 per cent in the two parliamentary chambers.

Regarding Eritrea, we note that the Monitoring Group found no proof that the Eritrean Government is supporting Al-Shabaab. Regarding allegations that the Government alledgedly supports armed groups in Ethiopia, in violation of paragraph 16 of resolution 1907 (2009), the Monitoring Group could give us further information with a view to promoting transparency. We also call on the Eritrean authorities to cooperate more fully with the Monitoring Group. My country alsonoted that the report of the Monitoring Group indicates the presence of Eritrean soldiers in Yemen, who are alledgedly fighting on behalf of the Arab coalition. That raises legitimate questions for Senegal. We would like further clarification of that situation.

Finally, we regret the lack of progress in resolving border disputes between Djibouti and Eritrea.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): France, like others, pays tribute to former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who was a great leader both of the United Nations and la francophonie. His passing fills us with sorrow, and we extend our condolences to his bereaved friends and family.

I thank the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. I wish to make three points.

On the political front, we welcome progress made with the adoption of the Mogadishu Declaration of 16 December, as well as the agreement on the electoral model for 2016. As underscored by the Group of Experts, these agreements are tenuous. The electoral reform has not been concluded. In many provinces, local and political rivalries impede discussions on the federal model. The recent fighting that bloodied the city of Galkayo demonstrates the fragile nature of progress in the protection of civilians and national reconciliation. We must remain vigilant and continue to work with the Somali authorities for the implementation of these agreements and the ongoing commitment of all in stabilizing Somalia.

On the military front, we welcome the courage and commitment of the soldiers of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali security forces leading the fight against Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab is on the decline, economic activity is increasing, and these are encouraging signs. However, that terrorist group is far from being vanquished. We pay tribute to AMISOM soldiers and Somali citizens who lost their lives in the latest attacks. It is worrisome to read that, in certain places, Al-Shabaab is enjoying the support of local populations in launching its attacks. Our shared goal is to continue relentlessly the fight against that terrorist group, but military action is not enough. As it is the world over, hearts must be won to rally people on behalf of stabilization and reconstruction projects for Somalia, rather than the morbid objectives sought by Al-Shabaab.

Thirdly, I wish to make a few comments on sanctions, because the sanctions regime is a decisive tool in supporting the political process and the fight against Al-Shabaab. The work of the Monitoring Group is decisive in that respect. Threats to the fragile process in Somalia are genuine. There are many who are interested in perpetuating war. They need to be identified and punished. Al-Shabaab and certain other individuals continue to finance their own activities through various types of trafficking, helping to destroy the country a little more every day and diverting financial resources to their own profit. These flows and this traffic must be identified and halted. Arms trafficking is, of course, a major factor of destabilization. We cannot overemphasize the importance of the arms embargo and of the need to ensure its scrupulous implementation, as well as the important role of the Somali Government in following up the flow of weapons.

On all of these points — and this is hardly a comprehensive list — France welcomes the high-quality work undertaken by the Monitoring Group and encourages it to continue along this path.

I wish to say a final word on Eritrea. We note the fact that the Monitoring Group found no evidence that Eritrea is participating in the financing or support of armed groups in the Horn of Africa. Nevertheless, we believe that conditions have not yet been met for the lifting of sanctions, as requested by the authorities of Asmara. We await frank and sincere cooperation on their part with the sanctions committees, particularly on the matter of Djibouti prisoners. This is the first stage of a gradual evolution of the sanctions regime. We do not understand what the Government in Asmara has to hide or what is stopping it from fully cooperating with the Monitoring Group.

The international community, the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union have invested much for peace and stability in Somalia. The action of the Sanctions Committee and the Monitoring Group is a game changer, and France guarantee its full support as they continue their work.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): I thank you, Sir, for your briefing and chairmanship of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. It is abundantly clear that the Council needs to remain diligent and focused on supporting Somali efforts to advance a stable, prosperous future with fair and transparent governance, establishing a Government that is accountable to the people and has the capacity to ensure that the country's natural resources are harnessed for the benefit of all Somalis, and not misappropriated by thieves or used to fund terror.

We would like to thank the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group for its efforts to oversee the implementation of these important sanctions and to keep the Council and the Sanctions Committee informed on a range of issues, including countering Al-Shabaab, piracy, corruption and violations of human rights. These sanctions have limited the illict flow of charcoal, depriving the terrorist group Al-Shabaab of revenue, and the Committee, with the support of the Monitoring Group, has helped us understand and maintain focus on the corruption that undermines efforts to build strong institutions in Somalia.

Peace will neither emerge nor be sustainable in Somalia until Somalis create a professional security sector, and we are commited to doing everything we can to facilitate security assistance to achieve that goal. However, the Government of Somalia must do its part by accurately reporting on the composition and disposition of its security forces. Without that reporting, we lack the most basic information to judge whether arms or related materiel supplied to strengthen Somalia's security sector will be safeguarded from diversion. Al-Shabaab still constitutes a serious threat to Somalia's peace and we remain committed to ensuring that this terrorist group is defeated. Cutting off Al-Shabaab's sources of financial support is central to that effort and a key to bringing about stability in Somalia.

The Committee, with the support of the Monitoring Group, should continue to expose and crack down on the illicit charcoal trade. The Committee should continue to engage directly with countries that may be receiving such charcoal, and Member States should remain vigilant and cooperative and actively share information, including information on vessels carrying charcoal, shipping documents, data on importers and anything else that can help in order to robustly and better enforce the ban. By imposing the charcoal ban, the Security Council came together to take firm, effective action to break the linkage between natural-resource trafficking and threats to stability in Somalia. Where we encounter this nexus, the Security Council should act. We should not shy away from addressing drivers of conflict in Somalia or elsewhere. We encourage the Committee and the Council to look broadly at how to prevent the diversion of Somalia's natural wealth to terrorists, corrupt officials and others who would undermine peace.

Related to that, we commend the commitment of the Combined Maritime Forces to helping track illicit exports. The Committee should do more to ensure that information from the Combined Maritime Forces about illicit smuggling trends is publicly shared and brought to the attention of relevant States. We would also like to encourage the Combined Maritime Forces to work closely with the Monitoring Group to update the Committee in real time, if possible, on charcoal shipments being tracked from Somalia. Such timely intervention can lead to swift action to interdict. It can help translate our intentions and commitments in the Council into more real and meaningful changes on the ground.

Even as we tackle the challenges posed by terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab and the illicit trafficking of natural resources that finance them, the Security Council must also keep a close eye on

another scourge that threatens Somalia — corruption. The mismanagement of public funds in Somalia will undercut any security gains made in the country. We therefore believe that the Federal Government of Somalia must redouble its efforts to ensure financial transparency, particularly with respect to the signing of contracts related to natural resources. We encourage the Monitoring Group to continue to focus on such issues and make appropriate recommendations to improve public financial management in Somalia.

As we fight terrorism and corruption, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that Somalis are not victimized, especially by those working to help secure their country. We are deeply disturbed by allegations that international forces bombed and launched ground attacks on civilian areas on 15 January in Gedo and in Middle Juba. We understand that this happened in the wake of an Al-Shabaab attack on the Kenyan Defence Forces of the African Union Mission in Somalia at the El Adde forward operating base. The point of fighting terrorists is to keep people safe. When the actions of those fighting terrorists potentially endangers rather than protects civilians, it merits serious scrutiny. We urge the Monitoring Group to investigate such allegations, including claims that cluster munitions were deployed in violation of international law, and report back to the Committee as soon as possible.

Finally, with regard to the situation in Eritrea, unfortunately little has changed and, frankly, it needs to. The Government's refusal to engage constructively with the Monitoring Group and the Sanctions Committee must change before anyone can take Eritrean calls for the sanctions to be lifted seriously. Obstructing the ability of the Group to fulfil its mandate, combined with further reports of Eritrean non-compliance with the sanctions, is simply at odds with the stated desire of Eritrean officials for the sanctions to be lifted. We therefore call once again upon Eritrea to respond to Monitoring Group requests for information and permit the group to travel to Eritrea.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): We thank Ambassador Ramírez Carreño, Permanent Representative of Venezuela, for his briefing on the activities of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea.

We commend the activities of the Committee. The debate organized recently (see S/PV.7620) by the Venezuelan presidency on the working methods of the Security Council's subsidiary bodies, particularly the sanctions committees, was a tangible contribution to refining and making the work of the sanctions committees effective. We still hope that the Venezuelan initiative will have a positive outcome through the adoption of a President's note on the issue.

During the Uruguayan presidency, the Security Council debated in depth the situation in Somalia, developments in the country, challenges and prospects. As we have done before, we reiterate our concern about the capacity, or incapacity, of Somalian authorities to control the territories liberated from the Al-Shabaab terrorists becoming a huge challenge to ensuring the participation of thousands of Somalis in the electoral process ahead, while remaining a source of instability with the resurgence of intercommunal conflicts.

We take note with concern of the findings of the Monitoring Group regarding the illegal trade in Somali natural resources and its potential to fuel the conflict. We are of the view that, in this regard, the Security Council should adopt an unequivocal stance by strongly condemning it and taking further measures for its disruption, considering that the exploitation, management and sale of natural resources are the prerogative of State authorities.

The suggestion of the Monitoring Group regarding the ban on charcoal is a constructive one and should be supported and implemented through cooperation among Somali authorities, States Members of the United Nations and the African Union Mission in Somalia, ensuring that it is not violated through corruption and falsified documentation.

Regarding Eritrea, we are pleased to note once again that there is no evidence that the Government of Eritrea has been supporting the Al-Shabaab terrorist group. The Security Council should take note of that development and take decisions accordingly.

With regard to border and regional issues, Eritrea and Ethiopia should cease all support for armed and rebel groups that affect the internal stability of both countries. Djibouti and Eritrea should engage in good faith, under the mediation of Qatar, to address the issue of missing Djiboutian prisoners. The Government of Eritrea should strengthen its cooperation with the Monitoring Group to address the issue. The situation of instability in Yemen and its proximity to Eritrea pose a threat to the country's security. We have doubts about information on Eritrea's decision to allow the United

Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia to use its territories in the fight in Yemen. It is our hope that Eritrea is not importing that conflict to its borders.

To conclude, we encourage the strengthening of relations between Somali and Eritrean authorities with the Monitoring Group, whose work we fully support, stressing that the Monitoring Group should strictly observe its mandate and not extend it of its own initiative.

Mr. Zhao Yong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ambassador Ramírez Carreño for his briefing and appreciate the active the work of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, under his able leadership.

Recently, Somalia's political process has made progress. Efforts aimed at building a federal system are proceeding steadily, and economic and social development is gradually being restored, which China welcomes. China believes that, with the help of the international community, the Somali Government and people will attain greater achievements on the path to peaceful reconstruction. China maintains that sanctions are not the end, just the means. Council sanctions against Somalia and Eritrea should contribute to promoting peace and stability in Somalia and the Horn of Africa, as well as to the counter-terrorism efforts of the Somali National Army and the African Union.

The final report of the Monitoring Group issued in October (see S/2015/802) found no evidence of support to Al-Shabaab by the Eritrean Government. In the light of the changes in the situation, the Council should make the corresponding adjustments to the relevant sanctions regime.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to commend the Ambassador of Venezuela for his outstanding work as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009), concerning Somalia and Eritrea. I also express my resolute support for the work being done by the Monitoring Group.

In line with the Toledo formula, I fully endorse the statement made a short while ago by the Ambassador of New Zealand. As such, I will confine my intervention to the five most salient points.

First, with regard to transparency, this is an inescapable requirement of our time. Society calls on us to provide it and demands that the Council be democratic. For the Council to be democratic, more transparent and stronger, we must open ourselves up to the membership. Therefore, open briefings by the Chairs of the Council's subsidiary bodies should be the norm, as should be the reports of the panels of experts that support the committees.

Secondly, on the political process in Somalia, today at last, there is hope for a new Somalia, which, from reconciliation to the political dialogue, should determine to move forward along the path of progress and development for the benefit of the Somali people — with, of course, the support of the international community.

Thirdly, with regard to security, I express my sincere condolences for the victims of Al-Shabaab attacks. The victims are civilian, military and of all genders, for Al-Shabaab lacks any sort of morality. In order to rein in this violent movement, it is urgent that we adapt the strategy in the fight against Al-Shabaab to the current situation. To that end, we need to be especially determined in two aspects. The first is to impede the export of charcoal, and the second is to cut off the sources of financing. Somalis should have no doubts as to two issues: first, Al-Shabaab will be defeated and Somalia's future will not include them; secondly, the African Union Mission in Somalia and the Somali National Army are on the side of the people.

Fourthly, on human rights and the humanitarian situation, I shall confine myself to stating our great concern with regard to the humanitarian situation, especially in areas under the control of Al-Shabaab. It is important that we prevent and punish violations of human rights, which are a genuine threat to the future of Somalia.

Fifthly, on Eritrea, I would like to underscore the importance of fostering a genuine and substantive dialogue between the Monitoring Group and the Government in Asmara. We welcome the visit by the Monitoring Group to Eritrea.

I would like to conclude by touching on the issue of sanctions. Spain's position on sanctions is well known. Members know that we believe that sanctions are never an end in themselves. However, they are a basic prevention tool in the Council's efforts, including to maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Mr. President, Uruguay would like to thank you

for your detailed briefing in your capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009), concerning Somalia and Eritrea. We also welcome the fact that this briefing is open to the membership.

Uruguay would like to highlight the efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia in providing information with regard to arms imports. We welcome the Committee's decision to draw the attention of Member States to providing their support for the programme to reform the security sector, which requires the necessary financial and technical assistance.

Uruguay reiterates its concern about the ongoing threat posed by the Al-Shabaab terrorist group, which continues to be present despite the measures undertaken and the supposed loss of firing power. We should never let down our guard when it comes to terrorism. Also of alarm is the possibility that there may be open contacts with other extremists in the region.

Uruguay would especially like to underscore the need to protect civilians, especially women, children and older persons. We encourage the Federal Government of Somalia to seek mediation and stability, in particular in areas where access to services and humanitarian assistance is essential. At the same time, we regret the fact that national and foreign forces operating in Somalia continue to attack civilians and violate international humanitarian law.

With regard to the information provided by the Eritrea Monitoring Group, Uruguay expresses its concern about the fact that there has not been greater progress — and there may even have been a setback — in achieving stability and peace in the region — if the alleged support to armed groups in Ethiopia and Yemen is confirmed, which has not been totally ruled out.

Lastly, Uruguay expresses its support and commitment with the effort being done by the Somalia-Eritrea Sanctions Committee. We look forward to an update on its work in the months of April and October.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

With regard to the political situation in Somalia and the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) in support of the country's stability, it seems clear to us that the priority is to strengthen all of the national capacities of the Federal Government of Somalia. In that regard, we hope that the process of strengthening institutions will allow the Government effectively to control its territory and all of its economic and social activities.

However, my country expresses its deep concern about the continued presence of Al-Shabaab. Although there have been major achievements in combating this terrorist group, its asymmetric attacks against troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia, the country's national forces and Somali civilians continue to be a destabilizing element.

We are also concerned about the potential of the conflict in Yemen to impact Somalia, especially when it comes to the growth of Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. If an alliance between the two were to coalesce, it could pose a serious threat to peace and security in Somalia. We call on the international community to provide all the necessary support to the State of Somalia so that it can exercise control, ensure the rule of law, extend its administration and provide services in areas liberated from Al-Shabaab, failing which those areas could fall back into the hands of terrorist groups. Although the sanctions — and the Sanctions Committee — must achieve their goal, they must be reviewed so that they can contribute to the Federal Government of Somalia effectively controlling areas being liberated from terrorists.

We are concerned that Somalia, which possesses enormous natural resources in the areas of oil, gas, fisheries and charcoal, can neither exercise nor profit from the rational exploitation of those resources, as is its right. In that regard, we should cooperate to put an end to the illegal trade in charcoal so that it is no longer a source of financing for terrorism and instead serve as a way of expanding and strengthening Somalia's capacity to effectively exploit its natural resources for the benefit of its people, who so desperately need it.

With regard to Eritrea, we emphasize that all the reports of the Monitoring Group, including its most recent report (see S/2015/801), show that no link exists between Eritrea and Al-Shabaab. Similarly, the territorial differences between Eritrea and Djibouti are under mediation through the Government of Qatar, and there are Qatari peacekeepers stationed at the border between the two countries. If we assume that the two reasons, which I mentioned previously, that gave rise to the imposition of secondary sanctions on Eritrea are no

longer applicable, we believe it is time to re-examine the validity and scope of the sanctions regime on Eritrea.

We recently held a debate on the working methods of the sanctions committees (see S/PV.7620) and the role of the monitoring groups. In the case of the Somalia and Eritrea Committee, we have a robust Monitoring Group, and some of its members have been reappointed. However, my country believes that the Monitoring Group has overreached its mandate by offering unsupported information on some issues. The first of those is the dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia. While the historic dispute and conflict that exists between the two countries should be resolved, in our opinion it is outside the purview of the Sanctions Committee, and an appropriate forum should be found to deal with the situation. We will have to carve out a separate space if we are to make progress with the issue of sanctions in compliance with the mandate of the Sanctions Committee on Eritrea. However, that should not be affected by the dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia, which should be treated in another forum.

Furthermore, with regard to the question of the representative of Senegal, the presence of Eritrean troops in Yemen has not been confirmed. This is an issue related to the transparency of the reports. The Monitoring Group of the Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee stated that it had received "unconfirmed reports" of the presence of Eritrean soldiers in Yemen. That is an aspect that we wanted to bring up at this open meeting, because there are elements introduced by the Monitoring Group that have tended to complicate the work of the Sanctions Committee and to perpetuate the sanctions regimes on these countries.

I would also like to report that, as Chair of the Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee, I have received an invitation from the President of Eritrea to visit his country. We will organize a visit in the next few months — certainly after February — with the aim of gaining a greater understanding and arriving at specific goals for facilitating the work being done between the Monitoring Group and Eritrea. I will also be able to hear at first hand the President's views on the issue, which I will then convey to the Sanctions Committee and to the Council.

Lastly, the security situation in the Horn of Africa has been greatly complicated both by the conflict in Yemen and the huge flows of small arms and light weapons into the area. We believe that the Sanctions Committee should undertake a political assessment of its scope and work. As the representative of Egypt mentioned, it is one of the oldest of the Council's Sanctions Committees. We should try to re-evaluate the situation and see how we can adapt in order to maintain and preserve peace and security in the Horn of Africa.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.